

Message Text

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17 11
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

ACDA-19 IO-14 EUR-25 CPR-02 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 /159 W
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R 280832Z NOV 73
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8561
INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC
USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 8493

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, TH
SUBJECT: PUBLIC REACTION TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR

REF: A. BANGKOK 18102
B. BANGKOK 18107
C. BANGKOK 18190
D. BANGKOK 18283
E. BANGKOK 18450

SUMMARY: MOST BANGKOK NEWSPAPERS CARRIED ALL OR PARTS
OF THE USIS BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF AMBASSADOR KINTNER.
THE ARRIVAL OF THE AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN A PEG TO DISCUSS
THE LARGER QUESTION OF RTG/USG RELATIONS IN THE NEW
ATMOSPHERE BROUGHT ON BY THE FALL OF THE THANOM GOVERN-
MENT. WE CAN EXPECT AN UNDERCURRENT OF CRITICAL
OPINION TO SURFACE PERIODICALLY. SOME WILL BE SERIOUS
AND THOUGHTFUL CRITICISM, THE REST WILL BE PETTY GRIPES.
WE ARE ORGANIZING A SERIES OF MEETINGS BY THE AMBASSADOR
WITH THAI AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS RESIDENT HERE STARTING
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IMMEDIATELY AFTER HE PRESENTS HIS CREDENTIALS IN ORDER FOR

THE PRESS TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS VIEWS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR KINTNER HAS BEEN USED AS A PEG BY SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS FOR COMMENTARIES ON THAI-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND PUBLICIZING OF ANTI-AMERICAN PAMPHLETEERING SUCH AS THAT OF THE "FREE CHULALONGKORN GROUP" (FCG).

2. THE INFLUENTIAL "BANGKOK POST" RAN VERBATIM ON ITS EDITORIAL PAGE NOVEMBER 24 THE USIS PROFILE OF AMBASSADOR KINTNER STRESSING THE AMBASSADOR'S ACADEMIC BACKGROUND (TEXT BEING POUCHED). OTHER PAPERS PUBLISHED IT IN WHOLE OR IN PART. THE "POST" ALSO RAN A HALF PAGE FEATURE ARTICLE NOVEMBER 25 HIGHLIGHTING VARIOUS QUOTATIONS FROM THE AMBASSADOR'S BOOKS AND CONCLUDING THAT THE AMBASSADOR "WILL BE A FRIEND OF THAILAND". THE WRITER, COLUMNIST "SAK PRACHIN", APPROVED OF THE AMBASSADOR'S STRONG SUPPORT OF SUPERIOR FORCE "AS A DETERRENT AGAINST HOLOCAUST TYPES OF WARS". (COMMENT: "SAK PRACHIN" IS A PSEUDONYM FOR M.L. PRACHAKSIN THONGYAI, U.S. EDUCATED STEADY CONTRIBUTOR TO THE THAI AND ENGLISH PRESS, AND CHIEF OF THE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH COORDINATION DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WHERE HIS FATHER WAS ONCE MINISTER.) THE "POST" ALSO CARRIED A LETTER TO THE EDITOR NOVEMBER 26 SIGNED "A POLITE THAI" WHICH EXPLORED THE CRITICISM OF THE NEW ENVOY.

3. MOST THAI AND CHINESE LANGUAGE PAPERS HAVE CARRIED ALL OR PARTS OF THE BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE ON AMBASSADOR KINTNER. THREE OF BANGKOK'S FIVE CHINESE LANGUAGE PAPERS ALSO CARRIED AN EXTRACT FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S RECENT PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE SAID THAT THE FCG ANTI-AMERICAN LEAFLETS DID NOT REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH THE FCG HAD A RIGHT TO ITS OPINIONS.

4. COLUMNIST KASEM ACHASAI IN THE INFLUENTIAL DAILY "SIAM RATH" REVIEWED THE FCG PROTEST LEAFLET IN AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 22. HE CONCLUDED THAT THAI-CONFIDENTIAL

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LAND SHOULD RESTRUCTURE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE BASES. THE AUTHOR ARGUED THAT DIRECTLY FORCING THE BASES TO CLOSE WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE SINCE THE CIA WOULD THEN BE PROMPTED TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT AND INSTALL FRIENDLIER LEADERSHIP. THE AUTHOR SUGGESTS THAT A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THAI SOVEREIGNTY WOULD BE TO RENT THE BASES TO THE AMERICANS,

AS MALTA DOES.

5. COMMENT: SEVERAL ISSUES, MOSTLY DOMESTIC, HAVE DOMINATED THE WEEK'S HEADLINES. IN THIS POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE, THE AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL HAS GENERATED RELATIVELY LIMITED COMMENTARY. WE ESTIMATE THAT THE BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN MINIMIZING FALSE AND HARMFUL SPECULATION.

6. IN THE LONG RUN SPECIFIC INCIDENTS, SUCH AS THE AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL, WILL BECOME A PRETEXT FOR COMMENTARIES FROM THE BANGKOK PRESS ON THAI-AMERICAN RELATIONS. THE BANGKOK PRESS MORE PROMINENTLY DISPLAYS ANTI-AMERICAN STATEMENTS WHEN THEY ORIGINATE WITH OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE THAI POLICY. IN THE NEW BANGKOK ATMOSPHERE MORE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS CAN BE EXPECTED TO DISCUSS THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES. WE CAN, THEREFORE, EXPECT MORE PRESS PLAY OF THEIR IDEAS AND THEIR CRITICISMS. TO HEAD OFF WHAT SEEMS TO BE GROWING PROBLEM WE ARE ORGANIZING A SERIES OF MEETINGS WHICH WILL ENABLE THE PRESS TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND TO LEARN HIS VIEWS ON KEY ISSUES.
KINTNER

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